

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T NASSAU 0707

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR BF US UK

SUBJ: BASE NEGOTIATIONS AND BAHAMIAN DEFENSE FORCE

REF: NASSAU 2124, NASSAU 0482

1. RADM W. R. FLANAGAN, USN, COMANTDEFCON AND COMNAVFORCARIB, ACCOMPANIED BY NLO, PAID COURTESY CALL ON BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, NASSAU, MR. PETER MENNELL, ON APRIL 27, 1976.

2. MENNELL QUICKLY TURNED CONVERSATION TO BASE NEGOTIATIONS AND DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS AND STATED THAT UK VIEWED AUTEC AS ESSENTIAL TO THEIR INTERESTS. HE ALSO ONCE AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS STRONG DISAPPOINTMENT THAT U.S. HAD NOT COME UP WITH AN ADDITIONAL CASH GIFT OF AT LEAST DOLS 10 MILLION WHICH HE FELT WOULD HAVE "CINCHED THE THING IN SHORT ORDER." MENNELL THEN ATTEMPTED TO ELICIT A STATEMENT FROM RADM FLANAGAN THAT USN ALSO VIEWED AUTEC AS VITAL. RADM FLANAGAN RECOGNIZED THE PLOY, HOWEVER, AND DEFTLY TALKED AROUND THE ISSUE WITH GENERALITIES.

3. MENNELL THEN SAID HE HAD HEARD, NOT FROM U.S. SOURCES, THAT U.S. HAD INCREASED ITS OFFER OVER THAT WHICH WAS DISCUSSED IN WASHINGTON U.S./UK MEETING LAST OCTOBER. NLO INFORMED HICOMER THAT IF THIS WAS SO, NLO HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF IT.

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RM MENNELL ALSO STATED THAT HE INTENDED TO DO "ALL IN HIS

POWER" TO SEE NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDED BY JUNE 30, BECAUSE, DUE TO DECLINE OF POUND, UK OFFER WAS NOW WORTH ABOUT HALF OF WHAT IT WAS ORIGINALLY WORTH IN PURCHASING POWER AND THAT IF WE DID NOT HURRY, GCOB WOULD BE LUCKY TO WIND UP WITH A ROWBOAT AND OAR LOCKS FOR THEIR DEFENSE FORCE. IN ADDITION, HE WAS DUE FOR HOME LEAVE IN JULY.

5. MENNELL CONCLUDED CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT VOSPER REPRESENTATIVES WERE IN NASSAU TO CONCLUDE BASE PLANS FOR CORAL HARBOR. ACCORDING TO HIM, GCOB WAS EAGER TO SIGN CONTRACT FOR NEW BOATS EVEN WITHOUT QUID MONEY IN HAND, BUT VOSPER WAS RELUCTANT TO PROCEED WITHOUT A DOWNPAYMENT OF APPROXIMATELY ONE MILLION DOLLARS. ACCORDING TO MENNELL, IT WILL TAKE ABOUT 13 MONTHS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND DELIVERY OF PATROL BOATS.

TAYLOR

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NNN

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